(c) if not, what other steps would be taken for expediting the early disposal of passport applications?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R.L. BHATIA): (a) No. Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Government have taken a number of measures to expedite the dispose of passport applications. These include augmentation of staff strength; increased supply of passport booklets; introduction of an incentive scheme; upgradation of office facilities and a review of systems and procedures in order to increase productivity and reduce delays. The Passport office Ahmedabad is taking approximately 85 days for the issue of passports where the applications is complete in all respects as against 105 days a year ago.

Resumption of Dialogue between India and Pakistan

1632. SHRI SHANTI TYAGI:
SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that early resumption of dialogue between Pakistan and India at the Foreign Secretaries level has been agreed to between the two Governments;

(b) if so, the issue likely to be taken up for discussion at this meeting; and

(c) whether the Kashmir problem would also be discussed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R.L. BHATIA): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The next round of Foreign Secretary level talks between India and Pakistan is scheduled to be held at Islamabad on 1-3 January, 1994. During these talks, it is envisaged that comprehensive discussions will be held on outstanding problems between the two countries including all aspects of the Jammu & Kashmir issue.

Inter Connection of Passport Officers in the Country via Satellite

1633. SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any proposal under its consideration to inter connect all the regional passport offices in the country via satellite to check the movement of persons indulging in anti-national activities;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) by when this plan is likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R.L. BHATIA): (a) No. Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Irish President's Visit to India

1634. SHRI MAHENDRA PRASAD: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether during the recent visit of the Irish head of the State Mrs. Mary Robinson to New Delhi any bilateral agreements and understanding for cooperation were reached;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) what are the agreements for cooperation in the matter of fighting terrorism particularly International terrorism and what steps have been and are being taken in pursuance thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R.L. BHATIA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A communique calling for annual consultations between the Ministry of External Affairs and the Irish Ministry of Foreign Affairs was concluded on 1 October, 1993.

(c) No agreements were concluded in this area.